1940

PAUL PARKER PHOTO.

1940

Eyes Right!

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Twenty-sixth Annual Report
of the
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.
1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

1940

PARK LEWIS, 1855–1940

A friend of humanity, a founder of the Ioy movement for prevention of blindness, an internationalist, an ophthalmologist. "If you would seek his monument, look about you."

Eyes Right!

IN these troubled times, the conservation of vision has become more important than ever before, and there is added significance in the increasingly heard command, "Eyes Right!" Good eyesight is not only an essential requirement for young men in our rapidly growing armed forces, but also a necessity for the older men and the large number of women who are playing their parts in the industrial sector of our national defense program. Protection of eyesight is now vital to national service as well as an important factor in economics and an expression of humanitarianism. It is with this vital cause that the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is concerned.

For more than three decades the Society has directed the campaign to reduce blindness from preventable causes. It has sought to keep abreast of scientific advances in this field, interpreting them to the public in laymen's language and explaining how such knowledge may be applied practically. Need for increased activities has met with the loyal support of more than 20,000 members and donors throughout the country during the past year; and the Society has been fortunate in having the whole-hearted co-operation of doctors, nurses, educators, lawyers, government officials, social workers, industrialists, illuminating and safety engineers, newspaper and magazine editors, broadcasting program directors, and many others.

"Eyes Right" for everyone was the goal set by the Society's founders, inspired by the early studies of Dr. Park Lewis and his conclusion that most blindness is preventable. To Dr. Park Lewis, who served as Vice-President until his death, September 10, 1940, and to Mr. William Fellowes Morgan, who retired in December, 1940, after twenty-five years as President, this annual report is dedicated.

Mason H. Bigelow

President

Headlines of 1940

ONE of the outstanding characteristics of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is its policy of working with the many voluntary and governmental agencies whose activities help to advance the long-range task of safeguarding eyesight. The Headlines presented in this annual report indicate some of the points of common ground.

Eye Hazards Increase with Speed-up of Industrial Production

Expansion and speed-up of industrial production, made necessary by national defense plans, increase the hazards which result in eye injuries and other types of accidents. In this emergency, the Society has appointed an Industrial Advisory Committee. Among its members are representatives of the New York State Department of Labor, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Association of Casualty and Surety Executives, Pullman Company, New York Central System, General Electric Company, National Association of Manufacturers, U. S. Department of Labor, U. S. Department of Commerce, Du Pont de Nemours and Company, American Association of Industrial Physicians and Surgeons, Union Carbide Company, Fred T. Ley Co.

The Society participated in the Annual Congress of the National Safety Council by sponsoring the session on "Eye Protection," and an opportunity was afforded for the presentation of the new industrial talking slide film, "The Eyes Have It." This production was made available without cost to the Society by the director of the Bureau of Safety and Compensation of the Pullman Company. Tens of thousands of workers have seen it already, and hundreds of thousands will be reached through numerous showings by the large industrial plants and insurance companies that purchased a total of 150 copies of the film, at cost, during the latter half of 1940.

Society's Glaucoma Exhibit Attracts Attention at A.M.A. Convention

Glaucoma (hardening of the eyeball) is a condition which confronts thousands of men and women as they grow older, and much blindness from this cause might be averted. In an effort to emphasize the responsibility of the family physician to observe

symptoms of glaucoma as a part of the general physical examination, the Society's exhibit material was devoted to this theme at the 1940 Convention of the American Medical Association, in Grand Central Palace, New York City. Hundreds of physicians registered to receive further information concerning this and kindred subjects.

The appointment of several nationally recognized physicians to serve with the Society's staff on a Committee on Glaucoma has made it possible to plan an active campaign to emphasize to the general practitioner the necessity for early recognition of this disease, and to educate the general public regarding the importance of periodic eye examinations by a competent physician who, through training, is able to recognize the subtlest eye symptoms.

Vision Testing Procedures to Be Evaluated

Testing the vision of school children and of preschool children has become a fairly common practice throughout the United States. These tests are usually given by school nurses, school physicians or teachers, and are conducted merely to screen out those children whose vision defects are sufficiently serious to be referred to a physician for further examination. Frequently the Society is asked to explain the correct method of conducting vision tests for screening purposes.

Since it has been impossible to obtain a satisfactory method practiced universally, the Society has felt it necessary to appoint a number of ophthalmologists, nurses, and teachers to serve on a committee with its own associate for nursing activities, to evaluate the present practices in so far as possible; and it is hoped that, eventually, a generally uniform procedure may be established.

Society is Host to Pan-American Ophthalmologists

During the Pan-American Ophthalmological Congress, in Cleveland, October 10–12, 1940, representatives of the Society met with leading ophthalmologists from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and other Central and South American countries, for informal discussion of common problems of sight conservation. Following an informal luncheon meeting, the delegates agreed that the Society, in so far as practical, should extend its services to similar organizations in Latin America. Much of the Society's

educational material, including posters and films, is already at work in these sister republics. The tragic halt of the activities of the International Association for Prevention of Blindness is added reason for the National Society's increased co-operation in this direction.

Fireworks Accidents Continue to Exact Heavy Toll

Reports of serious fireworks accidents received by the American Medical Association from hospitals and clinics last year totaled 4,462. These included 214 major eye injuries. Nine states now have laws forbidding the sale or possession of fireworks, except for community displays under the supervision of pyrotechnic experts. Such a law was adopted in New York State in 1940, and became effective August 1. Other states which previously adopted fireworks legislation are New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa and Utah. There is also some regulation of the use of fireworks in Kentucky, Illinois, California and Wisconsin.

The Society has, as in the past, publicized the dangers of fireworks accidents through radio, press and personal correspondence, and has been in close touch with the various national and local agencies concerned with the reduction of accidents caused by fireworks.

Eye Courses Train Medical Social Workers

As far back as 1931, the Society recognized the need for the preparation of specially trained medical social workers for eye clinics, and initiated such training with the co-operation of the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. This was and still is considered in the demonstration stage, and therefore the Society has been offering the opportunity of training only to as many workers as there are prospects of placing. In the past year, three special students took the one-semester course at Washington University, St. Louis; one was preparing for work at the eye clinic in the University of Kansas Hospital, Kansas City, Kansas; and the other two are working with eye patients in Denver and Chicago.

The Eye Health Institute, held in the Society's offices, for a period of four weeks, brought together students from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to study common problems, under the leadership of an ophthalmologist and the staff of the Society. These

new workers in the field are a great source of strength to the movement for the conservation of sight.

Manual Published on Use of Classification of Causes of Blindness

The Society co-operated with the American Foundation for the Blind in the publication of a manual on the use of the Classification of Causes of Blindness developed by the Committee on Statistics of the Blind. Members of this Committee also worked with the Social Security Board in the preparation of other bulletins, based on the Committee's plan for standard statistics, which were issued especially for the use of state departments administering Aid to the Blind.

One-sixth of All Blindness Caused by Syphilis and Gonorrhea

More than 25,000 men, women, and children in the United States—approximately one-sixth of the entire blind population—are blind as the result of syphilis or gonorrhea. Records of schools for the blind in all sections of the country now show that about 12 per cent of the children lost their sight through syphilitic infection, and about 8 per cent through gonorrheal infection. Statistics relating to the causes of blindness among adults indicate that at least 13 per cent grope in darkness as the result of syphilis and 4 per cent as the result of gonorrhea.

It is an established fact that if all cases of syphilis among expectant mothers are discovered and followed up with early treatment, we may look forward to a marked decrease in blindness and defective vision. It is encouraging to report that 20 states have laws requiring premarital Wassermann tests, and 18 states have laws requiring Wassermann tests for all expectant mothers.

As usual, the Society participated in Social Hygiene Day and publicized broadly the fact that syphilis and gonorrhea are serious causes of blindness and defective vision.

Sight-Saving Classes Demand Specially Trained Teachers

A steady increase in the number of sight-saving classes (especially arranged so that children with seriously defective vision may get a normal education without undue strain to their eyes) has necessitated the continuance of special training to equip teachers for this field. During the summer session of

1940, elementary and advanced courses for the training of teachers and supervisors of sight-saving classes were given, in co-operation with the Society, at Wayne University, Detroit; University of Oregon, Portland; Buffalo State Teachers College; and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. About 75 teachers and supervisors took the courses.

Nursing Education to Include the Subject of Sight Conservation

The nursing education activities of the Society are planned in co-operation with the organized nursing groups—national and state. Under the chairmanship of the Society's associate for nursing activities, the National League of Nursing Education in 1940 began a study of nursing education in sight conservation.

Special institutes on eye problems in relation to nursing were held, under the auspices of the state health departments in California, Iowa, Kansas, Oregon, and Washington. These were attended by 1,061 nurses.

During the National Biennial Nursing Convention, a special eye institute for supervisors and instructors was sponsored by the National Organization for Public Health Nursing.

College Students Benefit by Sight Conservation Work

Approximately 300,000 students in American colleges and universities—nearly 25 per cent of the entire enrollment—are handicapped by various degrees of visual defects.

An improved vision testing device for use with college students has been made available, through the aid of the Advisory Committee of Ophthalmologists on the Eye Health Committee of the American Student Health Association. It is hoped that some uniformity may now be obtained in the method of testing the vision of college students. The Society has kept the various colleges in touch with the latest information on eye hygiene and lighting for students.

Social Work Conference Includes Sight Conservation

For the first time the Society came together, as an Associated Group, with other agencies at the National Conference of Social Work when it met last May 21–June 1 at Grand Rapids. Sessions were devoted to the subjects of "Restoration of Sight and Prevention of Blindness" and "The General Agency's Opportunity for Sight Conservation."

Society's Educational Material Widely Used

Increased use of radio as a channel for reaching the general public characterized the public information activities of the Society in 1940. Broadcasting activities included approximately 300 presentations, by 158 stations, of the Society's electrical transcription concerning eye injuries to children from fireworks—bringing the number of broadcasts of this program to more than 1,000 in the past three years.

The Society's film, "Preventing Blindness and Saving Sight," has been revised and cut down to a one-reel film through an arrangement with the Eastman Teaching Films Corporation. Twenty states, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii are using the film, on deposit in visual education departments of state universities. Approximately 180,000 persons saw the film at nearly 1,500 showings. In addition, the Society's two talking slide films, "The Nurse's Responsibility in Saving Sight," and "The Eyes Have It," were widely distributed among the groups for which they were planned.

More than a quarter of a million pamphlets were distributed by the Society during the past year.

The Society's exhibit material was displayed at 186 national, state, and local conventions and meetings.

Society's Honorary Vice-President Receives Dana Medal

Mr. John M. Glenn, an honorary vice-president of the Society, was awarded the Leslie Dana Gold Medal for 1940, for his outstanding achievements in prevention of blindness and the conservation of vision. He was selected for this honor by the St. Louis Society for the Blind, through which the medal is offered by Mr. Leslie Dana, of St. Louis.

In Memoriam

The Society announces with sadness the loss of the following officers: Miss Lillian D. Wald and Mr. John H. Finley, honorary vice-presidents; Dr. Park Lewis, a founder, director, and vice-president; and Alvin L. Powell, a member of the Board of Editors of the *Sight-Saving Review* who served from its beginning in 1931.

Summary of Finances

EXPENSES DURING 1940			
Office Maintenance		$21,585.83	
Salaries		86,744.70	
Accounting and Auditing		1,970.00	
Field Service		6,254.73	
Publications and Exhibits		18,709.73	
Distribution Costs		14,199.91	
Meetings and Courses		3,308.08	
Co-operative Projects		3,945.22	
Annuities and Insurance		3,089.85	
Total Expenses, 1940			$159,808.05
INCOME DURING 1940			
Donations			
New	$13,804.89		
Renewal	78,116.22	$91,921.11	
Memberships			
New	$513.00		
Renewal	14,980.95	15,493.95	
From Endowment and Reserve Funds		13,999.82	
From Wendel Foundation		7,225.00	
Trust Funds (not administered by the Society)		7,275.62	
From sale of publications, subscriptions to *Sight-Saving Review*, etc.		6,145.88	
Total Income, 1940			142,061.38
Excess of Expenses over Income, 1940			$ 17,746.67
Total resources at December 31, 1939, including mortgages, securities and real estate at book value			$444,383.21
Withdrawn from Reserve Fund to meet Excess of Expenses over Income during 1940		$17,746.67	
Disbursements from Maude Haywood Scholarship Fund		300.00	
			18,046.67
			$426,336.54
Net additions to Endowment, Reserve and Special and Designated Funds during 1940, from legacies, profits on sale of securities, etc.			7,021.39
Total resources at December 31, 1940, including mortgages, securities and real estate at book value			$433,357.93*

* This does not include the following: $50,000 Trust Fund established under the will of Clementine Farr Duff; $20,000 Trust Fund established under the will of Charles F. Pope; 1/40th share in the unliquidated properties of the Wendel Foundation; ⅛th share in the unliquidated and undistributed assets of the Mary L. C. Earle Estate (consisting principally of country real estate of uncertain value); and the Society's interest in various estates in course of administration.

The foregoing statement is based on the report of Frederick Fischer, Jr., C.P.A., by whom the accounts of the Society were audited. A copy of the report will be sent to anyone requesting it.

The Executive Director is required by the Board of Directors to submit a detailed statement of proposed expenditures and to account for all sums spent in accordance with budget appropriations. Vouchers are on file for every expenditure.

A comparison of the Summary of Finances with previous reports shows changes in classification of expenditures during 1940. It is hoped that this new form of accounting will give members and donors a better understanding of the use that is made of their funds.

In 1940 gifts increased in number, as well as amount, and as a result, income from members and donors rose from $95,000 in 1939 to $107,400 in 1940. In addition to $107,400 cash from members and donors, the Society also received gifts of an electric typewriter and a talking slide film: "The Eyes Have It." Many other friends contributed generously of their time and professional counsel.

The Board of Directors again approved the use of part of the Reserve Fund for current purposes, resulting in a decrease of $11,025.28 in the Society's resources at book value after crediting net receipts through legacies, profit on sale of securities, etc., of $7,021.39.

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of.....
.....Dollars
for its corporate purposes.

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

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* Deceased March 18, 1941

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